

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 257107

FOR SISCO

FOL REPEAT MADRID 7538 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO RABAT NOUAKCHOTT
ALGIERS USUN OCTOBER 29, 1975

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7538

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SS, SP, MO, MA, AL

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA

REF: (A) MADRID 7536; (B) MADRID 7537

1. FOREIGN OFFICE UNDER SECRETARY ROVIRA THIS EVENING CHARACTERIZED SITUATION IN SPANISH GOVERNMENT OVER SAHARA QUESTION AS ONAOTIC, WITHOUT A CHIEF OF STATE AND WITH INTENSE DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AS HOW TO PROCEED. ROVIRA ADMITTED THAT HE HAS NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN THE CONVERSATIONS WITH WALDHEIM, BUT SAID THAT HIS INFORMATION HAD BEEN PROVIDED FROM FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS WHO HAD ATTENDED A LONG MEETING YESTERDAY BETWEEN ARIAS, CORTINA AND WALDHEIM.

2. ROVIRA SAID THAT WALDHEIM HAD COME TO MADRID VERY ALARMED BY WHAT HE HAD LEARNED ON HIS TRIP AND PARTICULARLY BY THE
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VERY STRONG ALGERIAN REACTION TO ANY IDEA THAT THE SPANISH

MIGHT TURN THE SAHARA OVER TO MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. WALDHEIM HAD PROPOSED TO THE SPANISH THAT THE DATE OF JANUARY 1, 1976 BE ESTABLISHED AS THE DATE FOR SPANISH DEPARTURE AND THAT, IN THE MEANTIME, THE TERRITORY BE HANDED OVER TO THE UN AS A TRUSTEESHIP. WALDHEIM HAD INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT THE MOROCCANS MIGHT AGREE TO SUCH A SOLUTION PROVIDED THAT THE TRUSTEESHIP WAS A "MANIPULATED ONE" WHICH WOULD IN THE RELATIVELY SHORT TERM TURN THE SAHARA OVER TO THE MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS. WALDHEIM HAD ALSO INDICATED THAT THE ALGERIANS WOULD BE INCLINED TO ACCEPT A TRUSTEESHIP ARRANGEMENT IF IT WERE A GENUINE ONE TO PREPARE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION.

3. ROVIRA BELIEVED THAT THE MOROCCANS REALLY HAD NO INTEREST IN THE TRUSTEESHIP ARRANGEMENT AND THAT WHAT THEY WISHED WAS FOR THE SPANISH TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD DIVIDE THE SAHARA INTO AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES OF MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. FOREIGN MINISTER LARKAKI NOW IN MADRID HAD TOLD THE GOS THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO WAIT IN MADRID AS LONG AS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN SPANISH SIGNATURE TO SUCH AN AGREEMENT.

4. ROVIRA COMMENTED THAT MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY CARRO MARTINEZ HAD IT FIRMLY IN HIS HEAD THAT THE ONLY WAY OUT WAS TO IGNORE ALGERIA AND TO AGREE TO THE CREATION OF AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES. HE HAD PROPOSED THAT SPAIN, MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA SHOULD TRY TO OBTAIN UN APPROVAL FOR SUCH AN AGREEMENT. ROVIRA TOLD ME THAT AMBASSADOR DE PINIES, WHO WAS ALSO IN MADRID, WOULD FLATLY REFUSE TO REPRESENT SPAIN IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. MEANWHILE, TWO OTHER FACTORS ARE OF DEEP CONCERN. ONE IS THAT THE SAHARAN POPULATION ITSELF IS BECOMING VERY RESTLESS AND INCREASINGLY BELLIGERENT. MANY OF THE SAHARANS ARE CONVINCED THAT IF PART OF THE SAHARA IS TO BE TURNED OVER TO MOROCCO, THERE WOULD BE A BLOOD-LETTING. THE OTHER VERY TROUBLING ASPECT IS THE INCREASING SEVERITY OF ALGERIAN ATTITUDE. IN THIS CONNECTION, ROVIRA TOLD ME THAT ALREADY WAITING FOR HIM IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE WERE THE ALGERIAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR ACCOMPANIED BY THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENCY AND AN ALGERIAN OFFICER. THE ALGERIAN DELEGATION, WHICH HAD JUST ARRIVED IN MADRID, WAS BEARING A MESSAGE FOR THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT FROM THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENT, BOUMEDIENNE. ROVIRA ASSUMED THE MESSAGE WOULD BE A TOUGH ONE.

6. ROVIRA SAID THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE "GREEN MARCH" WAS A BLUFF, ALBEIT A DANGEROUS ONE. THE

FOREIGN OFFICE THOUGHT THAT HASSAN WOULD NOT REALLY BE ABLE TO CARRY IT OFF, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAD PERMITTED THEMSELVES TO ACCEPT TOO EASILY HASSAN'S BLACKMAIL. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, ROVIRA SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW THERE IS ALMOST NO WAY THAT BLOODSHED COULD BE AVOIDED IN THE SAHARA. IF SPAIN AGREED TO DIVIDE UP THE SAHARA BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, HE DID NOT RULE OUT ALGERIAN MILITARY ATTACK IN THE SAHARA. HE REGARDED THE WHOLE SITUATION AS A PARTICULARLY TRAGIC ONE SINCE SPAIN'S ONE OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN TO TRY TO GET OUT OF THE SAHARA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND WITHOUT BLOODSHED.

7. COMMENT: AS FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE, THE PRESIDENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY MINISTER CARRO MARTINEZ, IS STILL RUNNING THE SAHARAN POLICY AND ROVIRA'S REMARKS MUST BE CONSIDERED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A BITTER STRUGGLE WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON BETWEEN THE PRESIDENCY, INCLUDING MINISTER SOLIS, ON THE ONE HAND, AND CORTINA AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, ON THE OTHER. CORTINA'S MAIN SUPPORT CAME FROM FRANCO AND NOW THAT HE IS NO LONGER ON THE SCENE, CARRO (UNDER WHOM THE SAHARA FALLS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES) IS IN THE ASCENDANCY. HOWEVER, THERE IS NOBODY TO MAKE ANY DEFINITIVE DECISIONS AND AT THIS MOMENT IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT HOW IT WILL COME OUT.

8. THIS MESSAGE SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH REF-TELS WHICH ARE FURTHER CLEAR INDICATION OF GOS DILEMMA.
END COMMENT.
STABLER

UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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